

Kanye West finds Religion in Hackney

Rapper converts to the British fashion market with a visit to a Shoreditch shop

Josie Ensor

KANYE WEST is turning to Religion in Hackney for some guidance. The US rapper is set to meet the bosses of the Shoreditch-based clothing firm this week to talk jeans.

The 31-year-old wannabe fashion designer, who is keen to launch his own denim range this year, arranged the meeting with the successful British company to get some inspiration.

Religion Clothing opened its first UK store this year in Shoreditch High Street, but the company has been designing its edgy clothing range in the area since 1989.

Last month Kanye indulged his new interest in the clothing business by attending London Fashion Week, and friends say he is talking with some of the best designers in the capital about how to get into the UK fashion market.

A source said: "He really loves British style - it's captured his imagination. And he wanted to tap into the source to give him some ideas."

At Paris Fashion Week in January, Kanye also introduced his first shoe line, designed for Louis Vuitton, which will be in shops this summer.

Kanye is not the first US rap superstar to have his own clothing range. In 1995, Jay-Z co-founded the urban clothing brand Rocawear, which he sold in 2007 for approximately £145 million. 50 Cent also co-founded the G-Unit Clothing Company in 2003.

The trend was made popular by hip hop pioneer Sean Combs, currently known as Diddy, who set up the clothing label Sean John in 1998.

Kanye West released his third album, *808s and Heartbreak*, in November last year. It reached number 11 in the UK album charts.



Kanye West is hanging out in Hackney this week

- Five things you didn't know about Kanye West
- 1

His favourite band is Scottish group Franz Ferdinand
- 2

He is lined up to do the voiceover for a new *Family Guy* character called Kenny West
- 3

His nicknames are Ye, The Louis Vuitton Don and Konman
- 4

He lived in China for a year with his mother when he was 10 years old
- 5

He still has a metal plate in his chin from a life-threatening car accident in 2003. He recorded *Through the Wire*, the first single from his debut album, with his mouth still wired shut

White families should be adopting black children, councillor argues

Katy Barnato, Morwenna Coniam & Clare Dickinson

CHILDREN should be adopted by adults of races different to their own instead of remaining in care until an ethnic match is found, the chair of Hackney Council's Children and Young People's committee has argued.

Councillor Geoffrey Taylor said: "I don't think children and carers have to be of the same ethnicity. I wouldn't want to say that ethnicity matters so much.

"A black child in a white family in Hackney will still know a lot of other black children. It's very different to rural Cornwall."

Although there is no law declaring a child must be of the same race as his or her adoptive parents, Cllr Taylor's views contradict the stance taken by social services and national adoption organisations.

Many social workers do not believe that potential adopters will be able to cater for the needs of a child of a different race to themselves.

One adoption worker, who does not wish to be named, said: "Deep down I think we as

a society are nowhere near ready to have successful inter-racial adoptions. I have little confidence white people really can ever understand racism."

Nick Glanville, manager at the Adoption and Fostering Information Line, said: "We think more effort should be put into recruiting more adopters from ethnic minorities so that there

‘Things in Hackney are very different to rural Cornwall’

is more of a choice available for children, but we agree with the principle of ethnic matching."

Some communities in East London also support the current practice of trying to avoid inter-racial adoption.

Imam Hussain of East London Mosque said: "It is harmful for children. If you are going to force a family to accept the boy or girl and they are not willing, the child [...] will feel uneasy.

The child's mind will be forced. Islam cares about the child's education and their mind.

"If they are from the same ethnic background they will be honoured, accepted and respected."

Hussain added that young children will find it relatively easy to fit into a family from a different background, but once they reach two or three years old the relationship presents more of a challenge.

Yashar Ismailoglu, who is a co-ordinator at the Alevi Cultural Centre, said that Cllr Taylor's approach to inter-racial adoption could cause "disaster".

He said: "Placing a Turkish or Kurdish child with a family of a different background is an attempt to erase the identity of that child forever.

"In cases where this has happened and the children were converted to Christianity, the trust between the social services and the Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot communities has been broken.

"We have also witnessed mental health problems in several cases where the children of Turkish Cypriot parents are placed with a family

of a different ethnic background."

Despite Cllr Taylor's objections to leaving children in care while waiting for an ethnic match, he also said it should be easier to remove children from families where they face neglect or abuse. This comes in the wake of high profile child abuse cases, such

‘White people will never fully understand what racism is’

as the death of Baby P in neighbouring Haringey.

Cllr Taylor said: "There has been an over-emphasis on supporting the parents, on the needs of the birth family. But the needs of the parents can clash with the needs of the child.

"In such instances, it is better to take the child into care, even though the care system doesn't provide much stability."

Martin Narey, head of children's charity Barnado's, agreed that the tendency of the social services to keep families together wherever possible was not always in the best interests of the children.

"The emphasis is – too much in my view – on fixing families," he said.



Councillor Geoffrey Taylor